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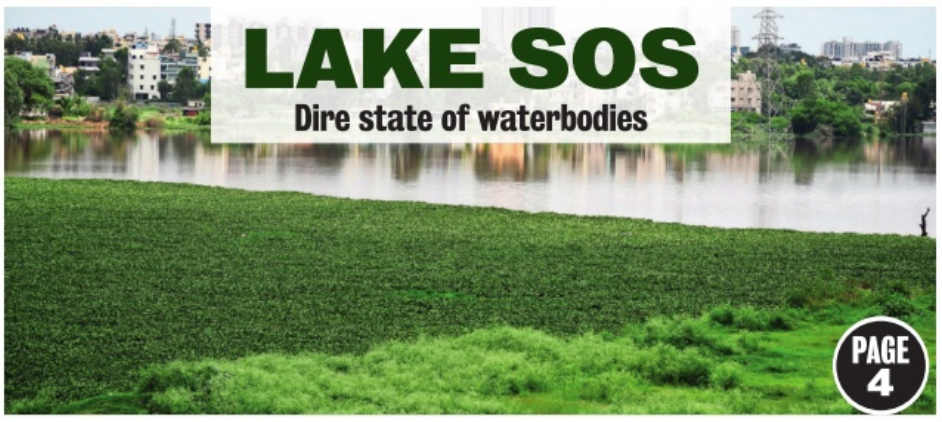
Bangalore Mirror

Merry Christmas

TEMP Max 27 | Min 16 | Humidity 60% | Clear with periodic clouds | Sensex 71,106 | Nifty 21,349 | Gold 62,972 | Silver 75,448 | Dollar 83.17 | Euro 91.71 | GBP 105.62



At Cantonment Railway Station, Shivananda Circle loose metal gratings on road are posing danger to motorists

GRATE-FULL DEAD

Issue unattended for 6 months despite complaints to BBMP

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

There are metal gratings on many stretches of roads in the city. Structural strength and safety of these steel arrangements are critical as a large number of vehicles pass over the metal gratings daily.

It's been observed that in some places the gratings are breaking off thanks to flawed design. The residents highlighted such instances near Cantonment Railway Station and at Shivananda Circle.

If the faulty gratings are not redesigned and fixed sooner, the anomaly can lead to untoward incidents, said the residents BM spoke to.

At Shivananda Circle, residents pointed out that one side of the gratings is cracked and damaged. They further noted the issue has been lying unattended for the past six months; despite their repeated complaints to the BBMP, the authorities concerned haven't paid attention or do not even think it is important to fix the hazard.

Prakash Pirgal, secretary, Madhavnagar Residents' Welfare Association said: "The location of the metal gratings is at the exit of the railway under bridge towards Nehru Circle. Vehicles pass over the metal gratings making a loud noise. Residents staying close by can hear the sound even inside their homes. The sound is ear shattering and can be heard even 150 metres away from the site. The gratings are broken; they shake each time vehicles pass over them. It is a hurdle for many motorists. Despite our repeated complaints to several BBMP officials, they haven't fixed the issue. There could be an untoward incident any moment; we cannot keep waiting for it to happen and then take action.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

> **"Vehicles pass over the metal gratings making a loud noise... The sound is ear shattering and can be heard even 150 m away..."**
>
> — Prakash Pirgal, secretary, Madhavnagar RWA

Prison brief

'Most inmates in state prisons under-trials, state tops inmate deaths by suicide'

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Karnataka ranks first in India in deaths of inmates in prisons by suicide. According to the prisons statistics of the National Crime Records Bureau, 15 people in Karnataka jails died by suicide in 2022. Thirteen of them died by hanging.

The state recorded 63 deaths: 46 were natural and 17 unnatural. Suicides contributed to 88 percent of unnatural deaths.

Among the natural deaths, all 46 died due to illness, in which maximum cases were of heart disease.

The data highlighted that the actual number of psychologists/psychiatrists in the jails is exactly half of the sanctioned strength. Out of the sanctioned eight posts for psychologists/psychiatrists only four have been filled.

Experts said the ratio for medical staff to the prisoners has an exponential difference which makes it difficult for either of them to contact the other.

Among the total jail staff, there are more than thousand posts that are still vacant including that of the medical staff. The state has one medical staff for 558 inmates; there are a total of 29 medical staff for more than 50 prisons in the state.

The report showed that most of the inmates in jails are under-trial prisoners. Out of the total 16,203 inmates, 77.8 percent are under-trials. There are 12,605 under-trial prisoners, and 3,556 convicts in the prisons. Most prisoners are accused

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Timeless elegance

Transport to the 15th century with a grand procession featuring horses, royal entourage, Guru, and Narthaki. Experience the divine Temple Dance, Navasandhi, a celestial ode with Dr Sangeetha Phanish at Chowdaiah Memorial Hall.
When- 4 pm, December 30
Where- Chowdaiah Memorial Hall

02 Christmas bliss

Holiday spirit comes alive across Nexus Malls in the city with Christmas decorations that promise a magical experience. A unicorn installation, 25ft Christmas Angel and Santa Claus and his reindeer-drawn sleigh illuminating the night sky steal the spotlight.
When- Until December 31; Where- Nexus Mall - Shantiniketan, Koramangala and Whitefield

03 Candle making

Unleash your artistic flair at the Candle Making Workshop. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned DIY enthusiast, this workshop promises to ignite your creativity. Explore the art of candle making under expert guidance, shaping unique creations that reflect your style.
When- December 25
Where- Paint Cafe Studio, Whitefiled

Divine artistry

Artists, depicting Lord Hanuman, celebrated Hanuman Jayanti at Paathala Anjaneya Swami Temple in Bengaluru.

BBMP urges 60% Kannada on all shop display boards

BBMP takes strict measures to enforce Kannada on name boards, issuing notices to non-compliant establishments, shops and malls given until February to comply

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With the ongoing drive to ensure Kannada on display boards for establishments, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has set a deadline for the end of February for all shops to adopt Kannada name boards. BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath, who held discussions with Kannada activists on Sunday, stated, "I will soon hold discussions with all the zonal commissioners on implementing Kannada display boards across the BBMP areas. In BBMP limits, there are 1,400 km of arterial and sub-arterial roads, and all the commercial establishments along these roads will be surveyed for the language used in the name boards."

He further mentioned that after the survey, notices will be issued to those shops and commercial establishments that don't have 60 per cent Kannada in their name boards. After issuing notices, time will be given until February 28 to adopt 60 per cent Kannada in name boards, failing which action will be taken. The zonal commissioners will also be told to submit an action taken report.

For a long time, there have been exceptions for not using Kannada in the name boards of many shops and establishments, and Kannada activists have taken exception to the same. Nath said that many name boards didn't have Kannada, and action would be taken against such establishments. "We will take legal action against those shops and establishments if they don't adopt Kannada up to 60 per cent by February 28. We are also contemplating cancelling the license for such establishments. Action will also be taken against jurisdictional officials if they fail to enforce the rule," he said.

He also mentioned that the same rule applies to big malls as well. Nath stated that meetings will be held with all the malls, and they will be told to implement Kannada name boards within the next 15 to 20 days, failing which action will be taken against them.

In response to a directive from the Kannada Development Authority, the BBMP implemented a new regulation in 2017. This regulation mandated that display boards for any establishment should consist of 60 per cent Kannada in a specified format and 40 per cent English. Furthermore, the rule specified that BBMP retained the authority to issue or revoke licenses if establishments failed to adhere to this requirement.

In the past, city has seen problems arising due to lack of prominence to Kannada in name boards. Above: A file photo of activists protesting to give first preference to Kannada at City Railway station; Inset: Kannada activists met BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath on Sunday demanding action against those not displaying Kannada display boards

> **"We will take legal action against those shops and establishments if they don't adopt Kannada up to 60 per cent by Feb 28**
> – Tushar Giri Nath, BBMP Chief Commissioner

In Festive Spirits

It's party time: Wild traffic jams of those making beeline to leave city, booked-out hotels and homestays

NYE rush-hour

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St Mary's Basilica at Shivajinagar is all lit up as devotees attend midnight mass prayer on Christmas eve

Despite the prevailing covid apprehensions, there appears to be significant enthusiasm surrounding New Year Eve festivities. Most of the hotels and homestays are already witnessing full bookings, with hoteliers and homeowners asserting their adherence to Covid Appropriate Behavior and other precautions to ensure guests' well-being.

According to sources, tourists from neighbouring Telangana, Maharashtra, and other areas have also secured their bookings.

Kumaraswamy, president of the Hassan Homestay Owners' Association in Sakaleshpur, said, "This year, our bookings have been relatively low, hovering around 60% since the beginning of 2023. However, we've experienced a surge in bookings for the extended holidays of Christmas and New Year. We hope these are the initial steps toward business recovery."

Another homestay owner stated that their bookings are already at 90%, and amidst the last-minute rush, they receive numerous calls for bookings. However, due to capacity constraints, they can't accommodate more tourists. They are open to additional bookings in case of cancellations. Homestay owners lament the severe impact of the covid outbreak since 2020, and now, they are optimistic about a business revival, although the recent surge in covid cases has raised concerns.

Cab operators on a ride

Simultaneously, many cab operators report thriving business, attributing it to the increased travel during year-end holidays. However, the police have stressed on the necessity of obtaining permission for resorts and homestay owners to organise New Year's parties to prevent untoward incidents. The Kodagu District Hotel, Resort, and Restaurant Owners Association said that they are fully prepared for the New Year Eve and have implemented Covid-appropriate measures. BR Nagendra Prasad, the association's president, added, "We are diligently following all the measures recommended by the Government. Kodagu is ready to welcome tourists."

> **"We have urged our clients, especially senior citizens and pregnant women, to wear masks whenever possible. We are fully prepared for Christmas and New Year parties, strictly adhering to any govt guidelines**
>
> — PC Rao, president, Bruhat Bengaluru Hotel Owners Association

More aware

Meanwhile, PC Rao, the president of the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotel Owners Association, added, "Since the three waves, we have learned a lot, and people are more aware of adopting Covid Appropriate measures. We have urged our clients, especially senior citizens and pregnant women, to wear masks whenever possible. We are fully prepared for Christmas and New Year parties, strictly adhering to any government guidelines issued from time to time.'"

Meanwhile, many tourist places in the city have been seeing a spurt in the tourists. "As it is year-end, many tend to utilise all their pending leaves and head out of the city. This was the reason as to why many of the outgoing roads witnessed huge traffic jams. In fact, Mysuru Road witnessed one of the worst traffic jams on Saturday. The worst traffic jams were witnessed at the toll plazas. There was a traffic pile-up stretching more than 1.5 km near the toll plazas and it tested the patience of the travellers," said Srikant D, who was heading to Kodagu from Bengaluru.

Have the cake, and eat it too

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Around 200 residents and children got a chance to meet Sandalwood actresses **Tara** and **Anu Prabhakar** on Sunday as a part of Christmas celebrations. A function was organised by Bharathinagar Residents Forum to distribute blankets and cakes for people and children from economically weak families.

"I am very happy to be part of this function that brought joy and happiness to children gathered here. I have been attending charity functions organised by the Bharathinagar Residents Forum," said Tara.

She said the function has enabled many children, who can't afford to buy cakes, eat it on the occasion of Christmas.

Many people gathered at the venue also appreciated the organisers. "I thank the Bharathinagar Residents Forum for organising functions on important occasions. It must continue its activities for the welfare of needy people," said a resident of Cox Town.

Anu Prabhakar said she attended an event organised by the forum a few years ago. She said it was nice to see the happy faces of many children at the event.

Bharathinagar Residents Forum president NS Ravi said that he has been organising events to distribute cakes and blankets for the needy for the last 27 years. "I am very happy to see each of the children go home with a smile after getting the cake. I thank all those who cooperated with me to make this function a success," said Ravi.

Docs' advice: If unwell, skip the party

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With the recent spike in covid cases and the upcoming NYE celebrations, health professionals have suggested that people with symptoms stay home and take appropriate measures while also avoiding closed spaces.

Officials from the health and family department said that the technical advisory committee (TAC) will decide on Sunday and recommend guidelines to the cabinet sub committee on December 26.

Randeep D, Commissioner of Health & Family Welfare, said, "For now we have been taking all the measures to identify the cases at an early stage. District and taluk hospitals are asked to be well prepared even if the hospitalisations go up. So far until Saturday there have been 13 hospitalisations and they are private admissions. The patients who are symptomatic are being tested and even their contacts are being tasted. We are keeping a close tab on the cases."

Dr Rajath Athreya of Sakra World Hospital Bengaluru and a member of TAC said that at present, it is deemed sufficient to take adequate personal precautions, especially during gatherings and festivities.

"Individuals are advised to avoid enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces, with particular emphasis on those with pre-existing conditions such as heart and lung issues, kidney diseases, diabetes, and individuals with compromised immune systems due to age."

Dr Athreya further added that individuals experiencing symptoms such as sore throat, cough, body pains, and headaches are urged to restrict their interactions with others, wearing masks to mitigate transmission risks.

Dr. Pramod V Satya of Manipal Hospital Millers Road, said that elderly patients and doctors have been asked to wear masks and keep away from ILI cases.

The health professionals stressed that there is no need to panic and to stay informed by regularly checking official guidelines. The hospitals attached to the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) are all prepared too.

Dr. Ramesh Krishna K, Dean & Director, BMCRI, said, "A separate ward block has been established for the treatment of covid cases. Six ICU beds have also been made available."

CITY'S LAKES IN DESPAIR: CRY FOR A LIFESAVER

Baiyannakunte Lake faces imminent decay

Residents and activists alarmed as neglect and danger threaten once beautiful Baiyannakunte Lake, urge civic authorities to restore and preserve the lake

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Baiyannakunte Lake deteriorating without improvement due to a lack of proper maintenance

The Baiyannakunte Lake near Holiday Village Road, off Kanakapura Road, has been in a deplorable condition for years. No efforts have been made to prevent the lake from further deterioration. From the water quality to the maintenance, the situation has been poor.

The residents revealed that the lake was rejuvenated in 2018-2019, and it remained a beautiful place to visit often. However, over the years, maintenance and monitoring were not carried out, leaving it in a bad condition. While the residents have reached out to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) multiple times for the development of the lake, there has been no initiation from the department to prevent and preserve the lake.

Srivatsa VK, Secretary of Changemakers of Kanakapura Road Association, said, "As of now, sewage water is directly entering the lake. Currently, some underground drainage (UGD) work is going on with the intention of bypassing it. Yes, it was rejuvenated a few years back, but there has been no maintenance since then. We had asked for maintenance way back in 2020, but the BBMP said they couldn't. It is time to rejuvenate the lake and do some facelifting."

Raghavendra B Pachhapur, a lake activist, visited the lake with the residents and found that, apart from sewage water entering the lake, the lake boundaries haven't been fixed, and there is no fencing at the lake. A property building nearby has built its compound wall that is encroaching into the lake and hindering the walkway. "There are also two transformers placed at the lake. This could be extremely dangerous. Immediately, the transformers need to be shifted. Maintenance of the lake is not carried out at all. Residents have raised multiple complaints to the BBMP and even lodged complaints on the Sahayya app, but it hasn't helped so far. There is no lake water; the sewage water has come and stagnated at the lake. Apart from this, tons of silt from sewage are dumped near the lake. If it starts to rain, the water can run through the silt, leading to the lake's deterioration even further," he said.

> **"If it starts to rain, the water can run through the silt, leading to the lake's deterioration even further**
> – Raghavendra B Pachhapur, lake activist

Pachhapur further explained that the resolution of the sewage problem is crucial to encourage lake utilisation, given its current unfavourable condition. Enhancing vegetation and relocating transformers are additional priorities, necessitating collaborative efforts from multiple agencies such as the BBMP, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM), and Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) to collectively improve the lake's overall state.

Another concerned resident voiced, "The absence of proper maintenance is not just an aesthetic issue; it's impacting our environment. We need immediate intervention to safeguard the lake and its surroundings for future generations. It's time for authorities to collaborate effectively and take swift measures to restore and maintain the lake."

No boundaries, no rules at Avalahalli Lake

Residents express frustration over delayed restoration, as the open lake becomes a hotspot for illegal activities

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Residents living in Yelahanka have voiced their concerns over the lack of fencing around Avalahalli Lake in the area. They say the missing fence has led to the lake premises turning into a hub for illegal activities. The fence was damaged in early November after a heavy downpour. While nearly half a kilometre of the fence was fully damaged, it has not been restored since then, leaving the water body open to untoward activities.

Locals say, most of the illegal activities such as consuming alcohol take place after the guards have locked the lake and have signed off.

"A good 500 metres of the fence was shattered nearly two months ago after a heavy spell of rain. Post that, there is no security and control over the entries. Moreover, the water body is guarded only between 9 am and 4 pm, leading to many security issues. A group of residents took a walk around the lake a few days ago and we noticed some illegal activity happening inside the lake boundary," said V Selvarajan, founder, Green Circle, a citizens' association working towards the development of Avalahalli and other water bodies in the area. Walkers also allege that lack of security has led to illegal fishing in the lake too. Residents say while they have tried to raise the issue with the BBMP officials many times in the past, they have failed to take action.

Bangalore Mirror
Holes in lake fencing: Mind the gaps indeed
Citizens, experts say other than security and law and order problems, fauna at lakes also face threat due to broken fences

Bangalore Mirror reported the lack of proper fencing at the Avalahalli Lake on November 11

"Multiple complaints have been raised regarding the issue through the BBMP's Sahaaya and Janaspandana apps over the last month. A couple of days back, some lake fencing work began, but it was dropped a day later. The situation on the ground remains the same," said a walker. According to the residents' group that takes care of the water body, while the Avalahalli Lake is under the BBMP's custody, the area comes under Singenahalli Panchayat leading to a lack of accountability. Locals say many other issues plague the waterbody too.

"The stormwater drain in the area has also been encroached. While the lakes are supposed to have guards around the clock, the lake has only one female guard between 9 am and 4 pm. To add to that, nearby construction sites are dumping their waste next to the lake fences. All these issues have been going on for months now. While we have appraised the officials concerned, nothing has changed," said Dr Vidhyasagar Arya, a resident of Yelahanka.

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Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Footpath mess
Cox Town

The littered footpath on Charles Campbell Road forces pedestrians, including the visually impaired, to walk on the road; BBMP remains oblivious to the issue.

BESCOM's oversight
RT Nagar

BESCOM is neglecting the maintenance of the electric pole near the Bhagat Singh statue on 6th Cross, Mannarayanapalya, RT Nagar.

Pollution hub
HSR Layout

The vicinity around the BDA complex in HSR Layout has turned into a dumping ground, filled with debris, garbage, dust, and pollution.

Equip, not shift: City wants all vet clinics to stay put

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The State Government's recent decision to close certain veterinary institutions in Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts, relocating them to areas with a deficient cattle-to-hospital ratio, has been received with stiff opposition from animal activists. They have emphasised that equipping the clinics with more would be a better idea than removing them.

In an online petition started by CJ Memorial Trust, it was pointed out that the need is to budget and make provision for adequate medical supplies, consumables and basic equipment for treatment, neuter/vaccination of small/companion animals at AHVS dispensaries and clinics. "The point of having (taxpayer funded) government vet clinics and consumables, medicines and equipment for all animals (especially for non-livestock) is simply lost if we don't have the wherewithal to actually save lives. With the number of pets and community animals increasing, the AHVS has to be relevant to the common man, who cannot afford to go to private clinics," the online petition at Change.org read.

They pointed out that whether a small vet dispensary, a clinic or taluk level hospital or even a super specialty Hospital like Queens there must be adequate stocks of medicines, consumables and equipment required to treat companion animals and that it is critical for AHVS centres to heal with enough material and medicines

BangaloreMirror
Vet clinics in transit
Govt decides to move 27 veterinary clinics from Bharu Urban to rural areas; activists say relocation of clinics will affect people from poor and middle-class families who own pets

BM had reported on Dec 27 about decision to shift 27 clinics out of Bengaluru

to save the very lives that they are set up to focus on.

Although the petition was initiated in September, Priya Chetty Rajagopal of the trust, highlighted that the need of the hour was to improve the clinics and not shift them.

Harini Raghavan, Citizens for Animal Birth Control, said, "Improving the clinics should be the only focus. Where do people who can't afford private vets go? Also so many people bring cattle or sheep to government clinics. Removal of existing government clinics should be a clear no. I am glad that Bengaluru is protesting. Efforts must be made to improve existing infrastructure in these clinics and an environment should be created where vets are motivated to do this daily."

This apart, it was pointed out to have a statewide list of all clinics and dispensaries with contact numbers and Google pin locations to be made available on the website and disseminated, so that animal lovers who are desperate for some care are able to reach the nearest dispensary to get the critical medical attention. There was a demand for inpatient facilities at the clinics, basic ABC facilities and training, and mobile ambulances that if equipped with basic life-saving materials and equipment could be a game changer in critical care and emergencies.

Some of the basic drugs that were highlighted in the petition as per veterinary experts were Enrofloxacin (antibiotic), Ceftriazone (antibiotic), Cpm(for allergies), OTC (antibiotic), Rantac (antacid), Perinorm (for vomiting) , Meloxicam. (Pain killer), Furosemide (diuretic), Beplex (b complex vitamin), ivermectin (anti- tick) and others.

Special officers to keep forest invaders out

Proposal to appoint team of retired officials of forest dept to keep eye on encroachment cases to be sent to state govt

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File photo of a student carrying a placard on conservation during a trek in Bannerghatta National Park

To ensure speedy disposal of forest land encroachment cases in the state, the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) is planning to appoint a team of special officers. The officers, who will be retired officials of KFD, will not only file forest encroachment cases but will also take them to a logical end in an expeditious manner.

According to Brijesh Kumar Dixit, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, KFD, the department will soon table this proposal to the state government for approval. The proposal will include the appointment of two special officers in every forest division, taking the total team strength to 80.

"We will soon be approaching the government with the proposal. These special officers will be retired KFD personnel who will be managing forest encroachment cases and ensuring evictions. The officers will have civil court power to perform these duties. The idea is to resolve pending cases of forest encroachments at a faster pace," said Dixit.

Currently, forest encroachment cases are being handled by the Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACFs). However, the rate of disposal of these cases has been low.

As per the forest department, 992 cases of fresh forest encroachment were registered between April 2022 and March 2023. The majority of these cases were from Belagavi, Bengaluru, Canara, Shivamogga, and Hassan circles. Moreover, as many as 44,608 encroachment cases are still pending across Karnataka.

Shortage of sanctioned posts

The department says while ACFs are supposed to take up encroachment cases, there is a shortage of sanctioned posts leading to a low disposal rate.

"ACFs handle encroachment cases as the power or facility of section 64(a) under the Forest Act has been accorded to them. However, there are just 200 officers of ACF rank in the department to look at encroachment cases. Moreover, this is just one of the responsibilities that they shoulder. If we have a special team to handle encroachment cases, the disposal rate will surely improve. For instance, while one ACF might be handling three encroachment cases per day, a full-time special officer will be able to handle at least 15 cases per day," informed Dixit.

> **"The officers will have civil court power to perform these duties. The idea is to resolve pending cases of forest encroachments at a faster pace**
>
> –Brijesh Kumar Dixit, KFD

If this proposal is approved, the department hopes to settle the forest land encroachment cases with GOI permission to regularise them.

"Although we will table the proposal soon, the process will take some time. The idea is on the lines of forest settlement officers, who are retired assistant commissioners and retired officers above the rank of assistant commissioners. We expect this move to progress in the same manner," said Dixit.

Gas cylinder blast at house kills 2

Tragedy struck when a cylinder explosion claimed the lives of two individuals, including a two-and-a-half-year-old boy, at their Garvebhavi Palya residence. Three other family members are currently undergoing treatment. The incident occurred on Tuesday. It is suspected that the woman Nikhila, 26, had inadvertently left the gas regulator on overnight after cooking on Monday. The following morning, Sandesh, lit the stove, triggering the blast due to the lingering gas release. Sandesh, along with his child Roshan, succumbed to injuries at Victoria Hospital on December 24, while the other family members remain in a critical condition. The police are investigating the incident. **–BMB**

Bengaluru FC secure 1-1 draw

Bengaluru FC bounced back with a late equaliser by the 22-year-old Sivasakthi Narayanan to settle for a point after a 1-1 draw against North-East United at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 to start off the Sunday doubleheader.

The two teams, seeking much-needed momentum, commenced the proceedings on Christmas Eve as the City of Gardens decked up beautifully to celebrate the festive season. However, celebrations didn't come easy for the Blues early in the match, who faltered in their numerous attempts to draw the first blood in this encounter, as per an ISL press release.

Javi Hernandez and Ryan Williams, who replaced Slavko Damjanovic in the starting XI, cam together to keep the NorthEast United FC defence on their toes. Williams was finding it easy to get into the wider areas of the 18-yard box, delivering quick, short passes for the onrushing Hernandez and Sunil Chhetri in the middle. However, neither Hernandez nor Chhetri was successful in shooting on target, as they missed rather golden opportunities to get a lead. **–PTI**

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

'Don't chase me'

Since the revelation of the 'smoke bomb' incident in the parliament and the subsequent news that the accused Manorajan obtained passes from Mysuru MP Pratap Simha's office, journalists have been attempting to reach Simha. Despite Simha's consistent vocal stance on various issues, he refrained from providing an official statement during the parliament session, where he was in attendance. Journalists finally had an opportunity to speak with Simha upon his arrival at the Kempegowda International Airport after the session concluded. In response to inquiries, the Mysuru MP requested not to be chased and he would offer an official response at a later time. Despite further questioning, Simha said that he was a jouranlist and knew how to answer or not to. Later, he spoke to journalists on Sunday saying that his articles over the years have shown how patriotic he was and he didn't wanted to elaborate further.

Evolution of sobriquets

Bengaluru, known by various names, has evolved over time. According to IT and BT minister Priyank Kharge, it transformed from being the world's call centre to becoming a prominent R&D hub and is now recognised as one of the most disruptive cities globally in terms of innovation. On the contrary, TV Mohandas Pai contested this notion, asserting that Bengaluru was never the world's call centre but has always been an IT services centre. Despite these perspectives, numerous netizens highlighted that Bengaluru was initially referred to as the Garden City of India and is presently undergoing a disheartening transition into a garbage city.

When bell rings, drink up

School bells typically mark the start or end of classes, but a school in Koppal has added four more to its daily routine—11 am, 12 noon, 2:30 pm, and 3:30 pm. The reason? Students from tribal areas were not drinking enough water. The principal explained that these special bells are a reminder for students to hydrate, addressing a concern about inadequate water consumption.

Why not minister?

In a recent banter-filled discussion, Ranibennur MLA Prakash Koliwada put in a cheeky request to the Speaker—he wanted to be a minister. His reasoning? Apparently, only ministers have their demands met, and the poor MLAs are left hanging. Responding to this plea, Speaker UT Khader playfully suggested that Koliwada needs to snag a win in the elections four times over before dreaming of that ministerial glory.

'X' duel

The ongoing verbal sparring on platform 'X' match between the Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the Karnataka Congress shows no signs of cooling down. Recently, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar accused the BRS of being involved in a fake letter concerning Foxconn's proposed plant relocation from Hyderabad to Bengaluru. Now, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and former Telangana Minister KT Rama Rao have stepped into the ring for a heated exchange. KTR, sharing a video of Siddaramaiah's statement in the Karnataka Assembly on 'X', challenged, "No money to deliver poll promises/guarantees, says Karnataka CM!" Siddaramaiah fired back, accusing KTR of circulating a fake video and questioning his ability to distinguish between what's fake and what's real.

English for my deputy

During Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent visit to Delhi to discuss drought relief with the Prime Minister, a unique linguistic standoff unfolded. At a press conference, Delhi journalists requested Siddaramaiah to speak in English. However, the Chief Minister firmly stated that he would only respond in Kannada, pointing to his deputy, DKS, as someone proficient in English and capable of handling the English media. With a cheerful demeanour, DKS playfully suggested that Siddaramaiah need not hesitate, as he was also adept at speaking in English. Despite the encouragement, Siddaramaiah remained resolute, expressing his preference not to speak in English and indicating that he wanted DKS to take charge. The lighthearted exchange added a touch of humor to the serious discussion of drought relief.

-Sridhar Vivan

BM Finance Fundas

Consumer Connect Initiative

Missed I-T returns filing deadline of July 31?

Don't forget to file belated ITR by Dec 31; Here is how to do it

The last date to file the income tax return (ITR) for FY 2022-23 (AY 2023-24) was July 31, 2023. If you have missed this deadline, you can still file it but it will be called a belated ITR and you have to do it by December 31, 2023. This is the last date to file a belated ITR under Section 139(4) of the Income-tax Act, 1961. It also attracts a penalty up to Rs 5,000.

A belated ITR is filed by individuals who have missed the original filing deadline, which is usually July 31.

Apart from the belated return, December 31, 2023, is also the last date to file the revised ITR for FY 2022-23 (AY 2023-24). A revised ITR is filed to correct mistakes in the original ITR. A revised ITR is filed under Section 139(5) of the Income-tax Act.

Steps to file belated ITR

The steps to file a belated ITR are the same as those to file the original ITR. Individuals have to log in to their accounts on the income tax e-filing portal to start the process.

While filing a belated ITR, remember to select the correct section — i.e., 139(4) — in the ITR form. There is no separate ITR form for a belated ITR. Usually, every April, the income tax department notifies the ITR form for the financial year. This is done to incorporate the changes made in the Income Tax Act.

For instance, the new tax regime was announced in the Union Budget 2020. It was made effective from April 1, 2020, for FY 2020-21 onwards. However, the income tax return form reflected the change when the ITR for FY 2020-21 became due — in AY 2021-22.

While filing a belated ITR form for FY 2022-23 (AY 2023-24), make sure you use the forms notified for AY 2023-24.

Penalty and penal interest

If you are starting the process to file a belated ITR, first ensure that you have deposited the penalty, the tax and the penal interest.

A penalty of Rs 5,000 is levied under Section 234F of the Income-tax Act. However, the penalty becomes just Rs 1,000 for small taxpayers whose total income does not exceed Rs 5 lakh.

Belated ITR is filed by individuals who missed original deadline

If you have to pay income tax, pay that along with the penalty amount. The penal interest will be applicable under Section 234A if income tax payment is pending. Penal interest of 1% per month is applicable on the tax due.

If there is any shortfall on advance tax payment, the penal interest calculation is done under Section 234B and Section 234C. An interest of 1% per month is levied.

Steps to file revised ITR

An individual can file a revised ITR if the original ITR has a mistake and the tax return has not yet been processed. The steps to file a revised ITR are the same as those to file belated or original ITRs.

While filing a revised ITR, remember to select Section 139(5) in the ITR form. You will also have to provide the acknowledgement number and the date of filing the original ITR.

What if you miss the December 31 deadline?

According to the income tax laws, individuals who do not file belated ITRs by December 31 still have an opportunity to file their income tax returns. This is called filing of updated returns, also known as ITR-U.

However, an updated return can be filed only after the assessment year ends. This means that if an individual misses the December 31, 2023, deadline to file a belated ITR for FY 2022-23 (AY 2023-24), the updated return can be filed from April 1, 2024.

Individuals can file ITR-U irrespective of whether they have filed original, belated or revised ITRs. They can do it even if they have missed filing the ITR in a particular financial year, provided they fulfil certain conditions.

An updated ITR can be filed within 24 months from the end of the relevant assessment year.

So, individuals can file ITR-U for FY 2022-23 (AY 2023-24) between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2026. Such individuals will have to pay 25% additional tax on the tax dues if ITR-U for FY 2022-23 is filed within the first relevant assessment year — i.e., between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025. However, if the ITR-U is filed between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, then 50% additional tax of the tax dues must be paid.

Individuals can also file an updated return if they have not filed any ITR earlier and have no pending tax dues. However, they will have to pay a penalty for the late filing.

Once an ITR is filed (belated, revised or updated), they must verify it as well within 30 days. If the filed ITR is not verified, the income tax department will not take it up for processing. Also, it will be assumed that the ITR has not been filed.

By Preeti Motiani, ET Online

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Dream on

Dreaming may have evolved as strategy for cooperative survival

Have you ever woken from a dream, emotionally laden with anxiety, fear or a sense of unpreparedness? Typically, these kinds of dreams are associated with content like losing one's voice, teeth falling out or being chased by a threatening being.

But one question I've always been interested in is whether or not these kinds of dreams are experienced globally across many cultures. And if some features of dreaming are universal, could they have enhanced the likelihood of our ancestors surviving the evolutionary game of life? My research focuses on the distinctive characteristics that make humans the most successful species on Earth. I've explored the question of human uniqueness by comparing Homo sapiens with various animals, including chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, lemurs, wolves and dogs. Recently, I've been part of a team of collaborators that has focused our energies on working with small-scale societies known as hunter-gatherers.

We wanted to explore how the content and emotional function of dreams might vary across different cultural contexts. By comparing dreams from forager communities in Africa to those from western societies, we wanted to understand how cultural and environmental factors shape the way people dream.

Comparative research

As part of this research, published in Nature Scientific Reports, my colleagues and I worked closely for several months with the BaYaka in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Hadza in Tanzania to record their dreams. For western dreamers, we recorded dream journals and detailed dream accounts, collected between 2014 and 2022, from people living in Switzerland, Belgium and Canada.

The Hadza of Tanzania and the BaYaka of Congo fill a crucial, underexplored gap for dream research due to their distinct lifestyle. Their egalitarian culture, emphasizing equality and co-operation, is vital for survival, social cohesion and well-being. These forager communities rely heavily on supportive relationships and communal sharing of resources.

Higher mortality rates due to disease, intergroup conflict, and challenging physical environments in these communities (without the kind of social safety nets common to post-industrial societies in the West) means they rely on face-to-face relationships for survival in a way that is a distinct feature of forager life.

Across cultures

While studying these dreams, we began to notice a common theme. We've discovered that dreams play out much differently across different socio-cultural environments. We used a new software tool to map dream content that connects important psychosocial constructs and theories with words, phrases, and other linguistic constructions. That gave us an understanding about the kinds of dreams people were having. And we could model these statistically, to test scientific hypotheses as to the nature of dreams.

> **Study supports earlier notion that dreams are not just random firings of a sleeping brain but may play a functional role in our emotional well-being and social cognition**

The dreams of the BaYaka and Hadza were rich in community-oriented content, reflecting the strong social bonds inherent in their societies. This was in stark contrast to the themes prevalent in dreams from western societies, where negative emotions and anxiety were more common.

Interestingly, while dreams from these forager communities often began with threats reflecting the real dangers they face daily, they frequently concluded with resolutions involving social support. This pattern suggests that dreams might play a crucial role in emotional regulation, transforming threats into manageable situations and reducing anxiety.

Here is an example of a Hadza dream laden with emotionally threatening content: "I dreamt I fell into a well that is near the Hukumako area by the Dtoga people. I was with two others and one of my friends helped me get out of the well."

Notice that the resolution to the dream challenges incorporated a social solution as an answer to the problem. Now contrast this to the nightmare disorder-diagnosed dreamers from Europe. They had scarier, open-ended narratives with less positive dream resolutions. Specifically, we found they had higher levels of dream content with negative emotions compared to the "normal" controls. Conversely, the Hadza exhibited significantly fewer negative emotions in their dreams. These are the kind of nightmares reported: "My mom would call me on my phone and ask me to put it on speakerphone so my sister and cousin could hear. Crying she announced to us that my little brother was dead. I was screaming in sadness and crying in pain." "I was with my boyfriend, our relationship was perfect and I felt completely fulfilled. Then he decided to abandon me, which awoke in me a deep feeling of despair."

Functional role

Dreams are wonderfully varied. But what if one of the keys to humanity's success as a species rests in our dreams? What if something was happening in our dreams that improved the survival and reproductive efforts of our Paleolithic ancestors?

A curious note from my comparative work, of all the primates alive, humans sleep the least, but we have the most REM. Why was REM — the state most often associated with dreams — so protected while evolution was whittling away our sleep? Perhaps something embedded in dreaming itself was prophylactic for our species?

Our research supports previous notions that dreams are not just random firings of a sleeping brain but may play a functional role in our emotional well-being and social cognition.

They reflect the challenges and values of our waking life, offering insights into how we process emotions and threats. In forager societies, dreams often conclude with resolutions involving social support, suggesting that dreams might serve as a psychological mechanism for reinforcing social bonds and community values.

Why dream?

The ultimate purpose of dreaming is still a subject of ongoing research and debate. Yet these themes seem to harbour within them universals that hint at some crucial survival function. Some theories suggest that dreaming acts like a kind of virtual reality that serves to simulate threatening or social situations, helping individuals prepare for real-life challenges.

If this is indeed the case, then it's possible that the dreams of our ancestors, who roamed the world in the distant Paleolithic era, played a crucial role in enhancing the co-operation that contributed to their survival.

(By David Samson, University of Toronto, The Conversation)

All you need to know about...

High BP before 55 years

Lasting impact on heart
Having high blood pressure or high cholesterol before age 55 can have a lasting impact on your risk of heart disease in later life -- even if you subsequently lower your levels, a new study has said.

The study
In the study published in the journal PLoS ONE, the researchers conducted a three-sample Mendelian randomisation analysis using data from the UK Biobank including 136,648 participants for LDL-C (low-density lipoprotein cholesterol), 135,431 participants for SBP (systolic blood pressure), and 24,052 cases for CHD (coronary heart disease) to assess the effect of duration of exposure to the risk factors on risk of CHD.

Coronary heart disease
The researchers discovered that when high LDL-C and SBP levels could be predicted using genetics, there was an increased risk of coronary heart disease, regardless of age at diagnosis.
They also stated that those with elevated SBP and LDL-C levels in their early to midlife years were at a greater risk of coronary heart disease, regardless of their SBP and LDL-C levels later in life.
In addition, they mentioned that coronary heart disease is often caused by a person's cumulative exposure to risk factors such as SBD and LDL-C, which can have long-term consequences on a person's risk.

Lifelong risk
"These findings support the importance of lifelong risk factor control in young individuals, whose risk of CHD accumulates through life," said the researchers. The researchers proposed treating young people with increased SBP and/or LDL-C is critical in order to reduce accumulated exposure. "Our findings suggest that old age alone should not be a reason to withhold otherwise appropriate LDL-C and BP-lowering treatments," they wrote. **-IANS**

Convocation ceremony dedicated to neurodivergent students

Prakramika Vocational Institute (PVI), a social enterprise that addresses the unique challenges of Children with Special Needs, conducted an exclusive convocation ceremony dedicated to neurodivergent individuals.

The event, held at Seshadripuram First Grade College, Yelahanka, on Saturday was a great moment for neurodivergent students as the special students were made to ascend the stage wearing the convocation gown and conferred completion certificates by eminent personalities.

Around 100 students were given course completion certificates by the chief guest Dr. Surendra Pal, Adviser to ISRO, in the presence of Indushree Ravindra, a renowned ventriloquist, and Dr. Wooday P Krishna, honorary general secretary, Seshadripuram Educational Trust.

A notable feature of the event was that the event creatives, anchoring, speech, and singing were contributed by neurodivergent. Dance by the hearing impaired and gifts given to the guests were made by people with special needs.

Left to right: Wooday P Krishna, Honorary General Secretary, Seshadripuram Educational Trust; Indushree Ravindra, a renowned Ventriloquist and Dr. Surendra Pal, Advisor to ISRO, giving the course completion certificate to one of the students

Commenting on the unique and memorable accomplishment, Dr. Gayatri Narasimhan, Founder Director, PVI, said: "This is the most satisfying day for not only me but all the professionals (Neurodivergent Students are fondly called professionals at PVI) and their parents. The vocational training by imparting skills has empowered these special students to make a career".

She said that several students from PVI have achieved successful placements in various companies, allowing them to lead dignified lives.

"Skill-based training programs at PVI predominantly feature academic-based modules. These programs are systematic, with curricula meticulously crafted to provide practical training to individuals with special needs. The courses, thoughtfully designed by our faculties, aim to facilitate knowledge acquisition for students across various neurodiverse profiles," she said.

Despite the high-quality content and practical learning focus, all courses provided by PVI are offered completely free of charge. Each year, PVI successfully trains and empowers 100 professionals.

On this occasion, Dr. Gayatri Narasimhan also released a book - "Unifying Pathways – One School, Many Abilities" - bringing all types of learners under one school umbrella. This publication showcases the journey and achievements of neurodivergent individuals who have completed PVI's courses.

Metal gratings pose risk to motorists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This should be fixed on priority."

Two years ago the traffic police and BBMP came together to fix a similar issue near Mekhri Circle underpass. The iron gratings were broken there too; as soon as citizens highlighted the issue the stretch was fixed.

Rajkumar Dugar of Citizens for Citizens, said: "It is important that such structures are made of good design and quality. Just like how potholes need a scientific approach to be filled and asphalted, the iron gratings need to be designed well, and should be strong and sturdy in nature. At Mekhri Circle, one portion of the grating had collapsed and another portion had come up posing risk to the people. However the officials came together and fixed the issue."

Dugar highlighted the case of the faulty metal grating near the Cantonment Railway Station. "The idea is to have good quality gratings that last long and that can even withstand large numbers of vehicles going over them. It is very dangerous; the BBMP on priority must take the initiative to fix the issue. Just coming with a welding machine and trying to fix the gratings is not the option. They should do it properly by placing strong gratings. Or else, if neglected, it can be dangerous for motorists and lead to accidents. Two years ago, we had raised this question regarding the faulty gratings near Mekhri Circle to the police; they got in touch with BBMP, replaced the material and tarred the road."

State tops deaths of prison inmates by suicide

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of murder or rape. The occupancy rate of central jails is 109.8 (where 100 is the place available for inmates), the district jails have an occupancy rate of 114.5 and sub jails have an occupancy rate of 58.7.

There are eight central jails in Karnataka with more than 10,000 inmates.

As the criminal proceedings are relatively very slow in the country, under-trials amount to more than half of the prisoners. The courts are stringent when it comes to proceedings but it is not always effective.

The condition of the prisons does not help with regard to the health of prisoners as over the past decade a lot of deaths have been reported in prisons where inmates' health did deteriorate due to the unsanitary conditions.

"The Legal Service Authorities Act mentions that a free legal aid clinic should be functional in every prison. But its implementation has been ineffective. For faster disposal of matters, an accused should have an advocate to contest the matter; getting legal aid in the form of a lawyer is quite tiresome for the general public, it is a slow process for the prisoners as well," a lawyer told BM.

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I Neerja Raman Grover W/O, Raman Grover R/o 18043, Prestige Ferns Residency, Harlur Road, Off Sarjapur Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560102 India. have changed my name to Neerja Grover .

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I, Krishna Murthy Ambaldhage R/o No 25 Jyothi Nagar 3rd Cross Near Sambharam College M S Palya Vidyaranyapura Bangalore 560097 have changed my minor daughter's name from Keerthi Ambaldhage to Keerthi Ampar .

I Rachitkumar Chandrakant Patel S/O, Chandrakant Babulal Patel R/o A-501,bren Paddington, Off Sarajapur Road, Kaikondrahalli, Bellandur, Bangalore-560103 have changed my name to Rachit Patel.

I Lekha Kunjilna Bharatha D/O, Bharatha K P R/o 401, Al Hamd Mansion, 6th Cross, Vinayaka Nagar, Jp Nagar 5th Phase, Bangalore, 560078 have changed my name to Lekha K B.

I, Jayalakshmi v D/O Vilvanathan # 15 Wahab Garden Pottery Town B'lor-46 have changed my name to Esther for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

MANVI. K. d/o of Mr. Ranganath. K and Shilpa. K Resident of No.3/1, Padarayanapura main Road, Vijayanagara Pipeline, Kuvempu Circle, Bangalore-560023 Has Changed My Name MANVI.K To DITHYA GOWDA R for all future purposes Vide affidavit Number INKA69851609829213V Dated 14/12/2023 Before ADVOCATE DEEPA M.

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Free Operations will be Done for Selected Patients in the Camp

HELPLINE NUMBER FOR PRE REGISTRATION

SURESH JAIN 9341222142 | ASHISH JAIN 9844250334 | DHANRAJ JAIN 9845350911 | SUNIL JAIN 9844111420

Send the Patient's Name, Address, Mobile Number, Photo of the disease to the above number.

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Agri gloom as climate change casts cloud

Growth rate dips to worrying 1.2% in July-Sept quarter as erratic monsoon hits farm output; impact on rabi season too

#New Delhi

Climate change has emerged as a formidable challenge to sustainable agriculture as an erratic monsoon this year hit India's farm output triggering a rise in food inflation which forced the government to take mitigation measures such as clamping down on exports. As kharif production fell due to the freak weather, the growth rate of the country's agriculture sector declined to a meager 1.2 per cent in the July-Sept quarter. The adverse impact has spilled into the ongoing rabi season with the total sown area declining by over three per cent with a below-normal monsoon leading to moisture deficiency in the soil and decreased water storage in reservoirs.

The acreage under wheat and pulses has declined by three per cent and eight per cent respectively which has raised concern over a fall in overall food production going ahead. There is now a great concern within policymakers and the scientific community to evolve dynamic response strategies to deal with this complex phenomenon of climate change, especially since vast areas in some states are still dependent on rainfed agriculture. However, despite the current decline in rabi acreage, officials in the agriculture ministry believe that the gap can potentially be narrowed in the next few weeks. They anticipate that the overall sown areas for rabi crops might reach the average levels of the last five years (648 lakh hectares).

Officials attribute the reduced acreage for pulses to late harvesting of kharif crops, like paddy, and a trend toward crop diversification.

There is some consolation in that the acreage for oilseeds, including mustard and rapeseeds, is higher this year by 1 lakh hectares compared to 2022 which would help in reducing the country's import bill for edible oils.

File photo of a farmer looking at damaged crops at a vegetable field after Cyclone Yaas in Patna

Senior officials point out that the emphasis on oilseeds reflects strategic measures to enhance self-sufficiency. While challenges persist due to weather-related constraints, the agriculture ministry's positive outlook of a potential rebound is based on the resilience of the agricultural sector. Balancing crop diversification and addressing moisture deficit will be pivotal for securing a robust foodgrain output in the upcoming season. "Since 2014, as many as 1,888 climate resilient varieties of seeds have been developed for crops. Besides, 68 location specific climate resilient technologies have been developed and demonstrated for wider adoption among farming communities in districts and regions prone to extreme weather conditions like droughts, floods, frost and heat waves," Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar informed the Lok Sabha earlier this year.

Acreage under wheat and pulses has declined by three per cent and eight per cent respectively which has raised concern over a fall in overall food production going ahead

India is the world's second-largest producer of wheat, rice and sugar, but has been forced to restrict exports of these commodities to rein in rising domestic prices. The country is the world's largest rice exporter and has been ensuring food security in countries across Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The ban on exports has, therefore, impacted the food availability in these countries as well. India's agricultural exports are expected to drop by $4 billion to $5 billion this year.

However, senior government officials are optimistic. Rajesh Agarwal, an additional secretary in the commerce ministry, is of the view that growth in exports of other farm commodities will offset the export deficit this year.

– IANS

Sports Ministry requests IOA to constitute ad-hoc panel to manage WFI affairs

#New Delhi

The India Meteorological Depa Soon after suspending the newly-elected Wrestling Federation of India, the Sports Ministry on Sunday asked the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to constitute an ad-hoc body to control and manage the affairs of WFI.

The ministry on Sunday suspended the WFI until further orders after the newly-elected body made a "hasty announcement" of organising the U-15 and U-20 nationals "without following due procedure and not giving sufficient notice to wrestlers" for preparations.

The ministry has written to the IOA to form the panel at the earliest.

"... Taking note of the compelling current situation arising out of the influence and control of the WFI's former office bearers, serious concerns have arisen about the governance and integrity of the WFI," said the letter signed by Tarun Pareek, under secretary to the Government of India.

"This requires for immediate and stringent corrective measures to uphold the principles of good governance in sports organizations, and thus, now it becomes incumbent on part of the IOA to to make suitable arrangements for the interim for managing the affairs of WFI so that sportspersons of wrestling discipline do not suffer in any manner and the principle of good governance in the sports body do not get jeopradised," he said in the letter addressed to IOA President PT Usha. The WFI elections were held on December 21 with former president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's loyalist, Sanjay Singh, and his panel winning the polls by big margins.

Before the elections were held, the WFI was run by an ad-hoc body formed by the IOA after former president Brij Bhushan stepped aside. Bhuoender Singh Bajwa, who doubled up as the president of the Wushu Federation of India, was then the chief of the ad-hoc body.

Top wrestler Bajrang Punia, who along with Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik, had led the agitation against Brij Bhushan had returned his Padma Shri award to the government on Friday in protest.

– PTI

Wrestler Sakshi Malik speaks to the media on the suspension of the newly elected body of the Wrestling Federation of India on Sunday

India reports 656 fresh covid-19 cases

#New Delhi

A A total of 656 cases of Covid-19 subvariant JN.1 and one death have been reported in the country for the past 24 hours, according to data from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
The total number of active cases of Covid-19 in the country was recorded at 3742.
Earlier on Saturday, a multifold spurt in fresh COVID cases was noted in India, with Kerala contributing the majority of those. A total of 423 cases were reported, of which 266 were from Kerala and 70 from neighbouring Karnataka, Union health ministry data showed.
Two deaths were reported in Kerala.

Meanwhile, former AIIMS director and senior pulmonologist, Dr Randeep Guleria said that the new subvariant of COVID is not causing severe infections and hospitalisation. "It is more transmissible, it is spreading more rapidly, and it is gradually becoming a dominant variant. It is causing more infections but the data also suggests that it is not causing severe infections or hospitalisations. Most of the symptoms are predominantly in the upper airways, like fever, cough, cold, sore throat, running nose and body aches," Dr Guleria said.

A medic puts up a notice at a covid-19 testing centre of the district hospital, in Chikkamagaluru district, on Saturday

Earlier, India SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) chief Dr NK Arora also said that no additional dose of vaccine is needed against the subvariant at present.

Speaking to ANI about the current situation in the country, Dr Arora said, "I would say prevention is required for all those who are 60 years of age or older, who are likely to have comorbidities and those who are on drugs that suppress our immunity, like cancer patients. If they have not taken precaution so far, then they are advised to take precaution; otherwise, there is no need for any additional doses."

– ANI

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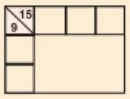
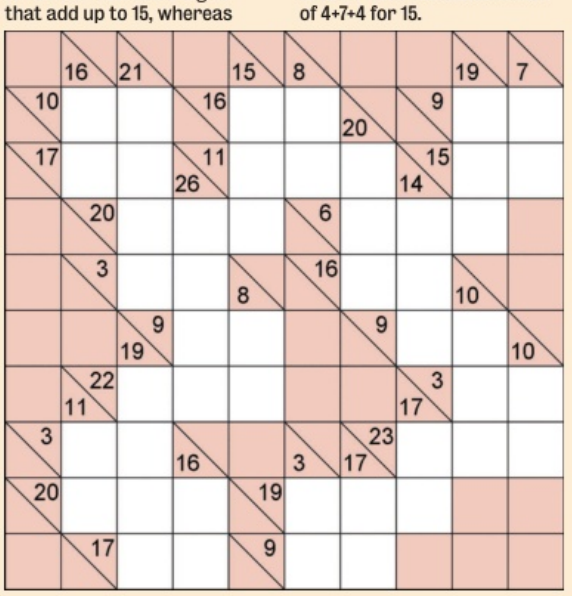
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas



for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



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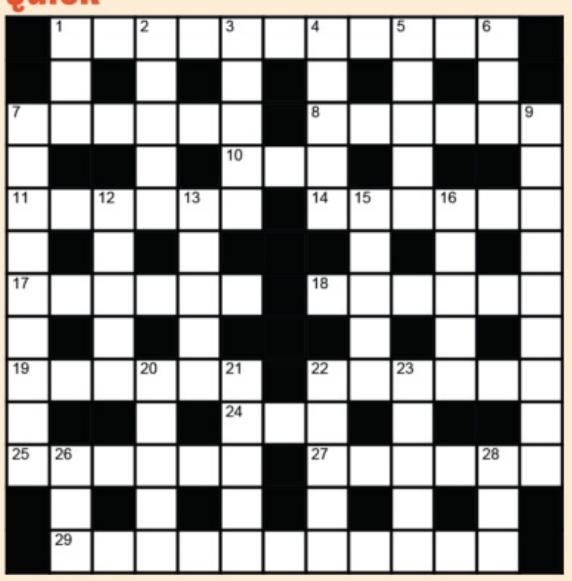


ACROSS

1 Grassly (11)
7 Port in SW Russia (6)
8 Narrow escape (6)
10 Gloating cry (3)
11 In a profound manner? (6)
14 Mend (6)
17 Et ____ : etc.? (6)
18 Foundation author Isaac ___ (6)
19 Lined up (2,1,3)
22 Consisting of flowers (6)
24 Tint (3)
25 Local inhabitant (6)
27 Lapis ___ : bright blue gem or mineral (6)
29 Like a hendecagon (6-5)

DOWN

1 Chinese principle (3)
2 Become interested or aroused, in a way? (3,2)
3 Diplomatic messenger (5)
4 Belgian painter – "senor" anagram ? (5)
5 A fall in trade (5)
6 Yes or aye (3)
7 Decrease (9)
9 Restaurant at the Taj Gateway hotel known for its seafood (9)
12 Minor film actor (5)
13 Slow musical tempo (5)
15 Three-legged frame on which an unfinished canvas rests (5)
16 City in Rajasthan (5)
20 Elevate (5)
21 At what place? (5)
22 Topples or cuts down trees (5)
23 Seeped or drained out (5)
26 To imitate (3)
28 Cover (3)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: V EQUALS H

VL AK ZPLUW LCSHZV WVUW AK VAK SGC BUKWLP.

Linemaro

You're cooler than ice on the rocks

Mindchow

Remembering a wrong is like carrying a burden in the mind

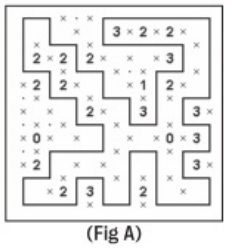
Joke of the day

Grandad asked me how to print on his new computer. I said, "Just Control-P" He said, "I haven't been able to do that for years."

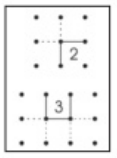
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)



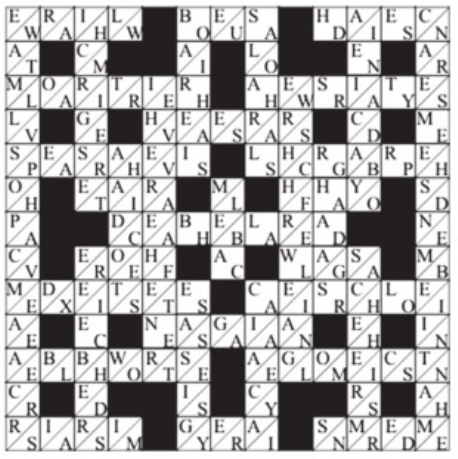
(Fig B) Not Allowed

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5 B
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

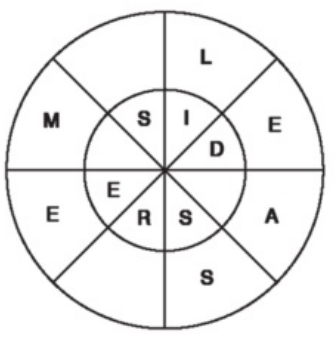
1 But HM; 6 Learn;
7 I acme; 8 Retem;
9 Soppy

DOWN

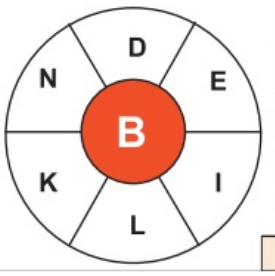
1 P Mart; 2 She me;
3 Tiny U; 4 Marco;
5 Plebe

Mensapuzzle

Find two words, one reading clockwise round the outer circle, and one reading anti-clockwise round the inner circle, which are opposite in meaning. You must provide the missing letters.



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

09 Average; **10** Good; **12** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	7				1	5		
		5		4	8			3
2			6		5			
	5							6
1	2						8	7
3							5	
			9		6			2
6			5	1		7		
		7	2				9	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

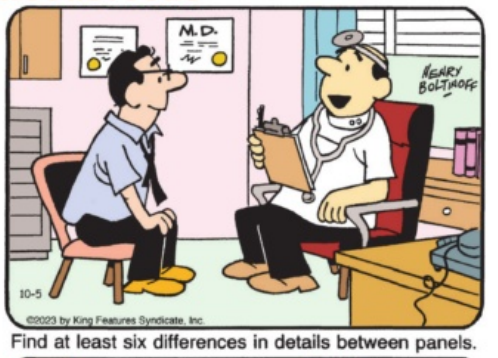
Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 12
1 3 8 8

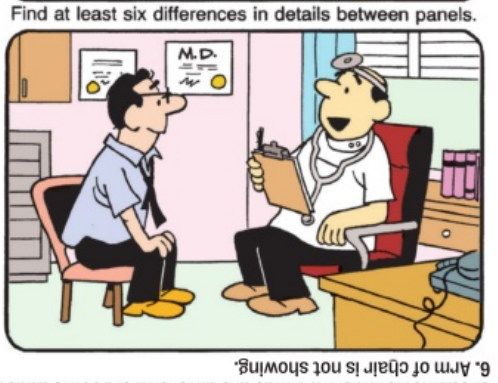
Medium = 4
1 3 4 8

Hard = 28
4 7 8 7

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Desk is wider. 2. Chair leg is moved. 3. Cabinet is wider. 4. Blinds are different. 5. Book is added. 6. Arm of chair is not showing.

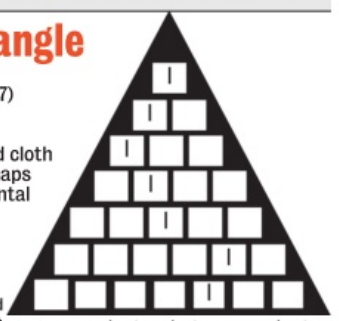
Riddler

Each pair of definitions is for two words, where the second word is the first word with a letter deleted (example: brand & band). The length of the first word in each pair is provided, along with the position of the deleted letter to obtain the second word.

1) a storage room (6 letters) & (delete 6th letter) near
2) to genuflect (5 letters) & (delete 2nd letter) to capsize
3) the teaching staff (7 letters) & (delete 3rd letter) having imperfections
4) the moment in which something occurs (4 letters) & (delete 3rd letter) to bind

Alpha triangle

1 Egoistic letter
2 Atomic number (77)
3 Spleen
4 Hoar
5 Watery-patterned cloth
6 Hostel mate, perhaps
7 More temperamental



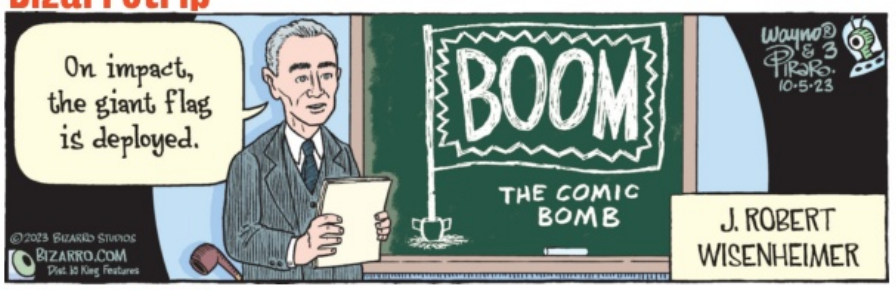
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

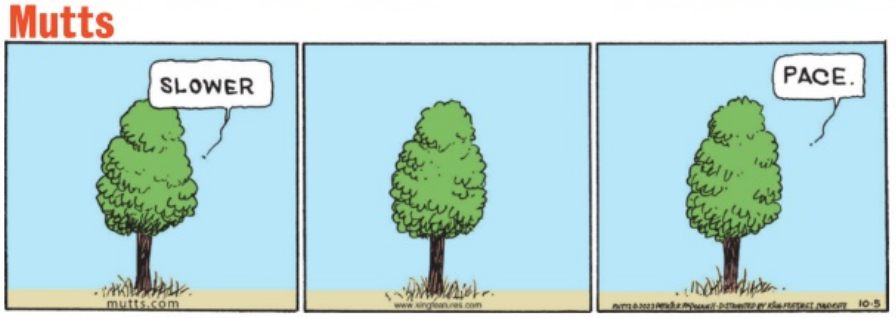
Hart of the city

IF YOU DON'T START COLORING INSIDE THE LINES SOON... I'M GOING TO COMPLETELY LOSE IT!
HA HA HA HA HA
IS THIS APPROPRIATE?
OH, YEAH! WE ENCOURAGE LAUGHTER HERE. THE DAYS OF QUIET LIBRARIES ARE OVER.
THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT BY DREW DAYWALT AND OLIVER JEFFERS
HEART OF THE CITY © 2023 ANDREWS MCMEEL

Crankshaft

DAD'S WORKING ON A PLAN TO MAKE REMOVING THE LEAVES FROM THE GUTTERS EASIER!
SHOULD WE ALERT THE WORLD?
I'VE GOT EMS ON STANDBY!
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts



WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may experience mental peace. You are likely to be busy with friends and family, enjoying your domestic life and increasing understanding with your spouse. There is a new partnership in your business, and innovations may help it grow. Disputes in partnerships may be resolved now.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, your good health may make you happy as health-related issues are being resolved. You may control your unnecessary expenditures, and new sources of income may open up, boosting your financial health. Singles may find a soul mate in the same community.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, the moon is positive, giving you the energy to perform efficiently at work. You may help a needy person, enhancing your prestige. Spend time studying intellectual material and consider planning for higher studies to groom your career.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Until evening, you may be impatient and lack confidence, affecting your work. Parent's health may upset you, and children's notorious behaviour may also bother you. Focus on yourself and avoid scattering your energy. Avoid investments in risky assets.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may be happy and plan for an overseas work-related trip, increasing your business prospects. Spending money on luxury items may improve your lifestyle, but avoid driving yourself towards glamour or addictions, as it may affect your financial health.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, control your way of speaking to maintain family harmony. Avoid spending money on worthless items to uphold your social status. Be cautious with your finances and avoid keeping money loose in your pocket.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you may be busy with your child's career or extracurricular activities. Seek advice on career options from consultants or specialists. You may hear good news regarding your child's results and consider investing in your family business.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, control your way of speaking and be cautious of hidden enemies and opponents. Avoid making investments in risky assets and refrain from lending money. Practice meditation and yoga to reduce stress. Lovebirds should be cautious about getting involved in controversies, and students are advised to work hard.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, job seekers may find new opportunities, and there are chances of promotions in current jobs. Businesses may gain new clients, leading to increased profits. Singles may find a suitable match, but in domestic life, avoid hiding anything from your spouse to maintain a strong relationship.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today is a successful day in terms of your profession. Your plans are yielding positive results, and there may be good news related to past investments. Your creativity can help improve your professional skills. Job seekers are likely to find suitable opportunities, and students may have good focus after self-analysis.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Until the afternoon, you may feel upset, but the elder's blessings may protect you. Your willpower can help you complete delayed projects. Avoid arguments in domestic life, and by the evening, you may experience gains from past investments.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, the moon is not positive, and there are chances of not feeling well with possible health issues. Avoid making investments in new business projects to prevent losses. Students should avoid fantasy and focus on working hard in their studies. Also, avoid rushing while driving.

KIDZONE

Jason Xavier, 12 Years, Indiranagar Cambridge School

Janani N Tarakesh, 8 Years, Cluny Convent High School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
(4-8+4) / (4+4) =
(8-8) /8 =
0 / 8 = 0

QUOTE UNCODE
He is great enough that is his own master.

BULL'S EYE
bend, bide, bile, bilk, billed, bind, bindle, bled, blend, blind, blink, BLINKED

FAST FIVE

T	H	U	M	B
R	E	N	A	L
A	M	I	C	E
M	E	T	R	E
P	S	Y	O	P

STRIKE OUT

S	A	R	I		Y	E	A		S	M	E	E		
R	E		S		C		S			H				
A	B	H	O	R	S		E	G	O	I	S	T		
	E		C		E	A	G	A	N		H		N	
E	X	I	S	T	S		C	I	R	C	L	E		
	V		R	E	F		A		W	A	S		M	
H		T	A	R		M		H	A	Y		D		
	A		D	A	B	B	L	E	D			E		
S	A	S	H	E	S		S	C	R	A	P	E		
	L		E		V	E	R		D			M		
A	C		T	E	R		A	E	R	A	T	E		
W	A	I	L		B	U	S		D	I	S	C		

QUICK

T	A	S	T	E		L	E	S	S	L	Y			
	P		S		R		L		E		I			
N	A	T	I		V	E		L	A	Z	U	L	I	
	O			A		H	U	E		O			L	
I	N	A	R	O	W		F	L	O	R	A	L		
T		R		G				E				A		
C	E	T	E	R	A		A	S	I	M	O	V	E	
	D	A	B	B	L	E	D					E		
D	E	E	P	L	Y		R	E	P	A	I	R		
E		U		O	H	O		M				A		
R	O	S	T	O	V		S	O	U	E	A	K		
A	I		N		N	L			E					
E	L	E	V	E	N	S	I	D	E	D				

RIDDLER
1) closet & close,
2) kneel & keel,
3) faculty & faulty,
4) time & tie

MENSA PUZZLE
ASSEMBLE, DISPERSE

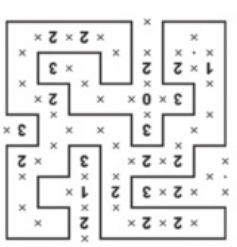
SUDOKU

8	7	4	3	2	1	5	6	9
9	6	5	7	4	8	1	2	3
2	3	1	6	9	5	8	7	4
7	5	8	1	3	2	9	4	6
3	4	9	8	6	7	2	5	1
5	8	3	9	7	6	4	1	2
6	9	2	5	1	4	7	3	8
1	2	6	4	5	9	3	8	7
4	1	7	2	8	3	6	9	5

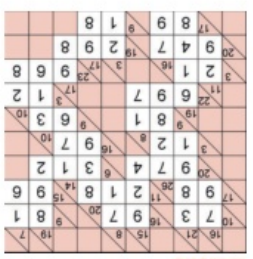
ALPHA TRIANGLE
I, Ir, Ire, Rime, Morie, Roomie, Moodier.

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 - 3 - 1 + 8 = 12
Medium
8 / 4 - 1 + 3 = 4
Hard
8 - 7 x 4 x 7 = 28

LOOP



KAKURO



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SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Multiple roles

Director-cum-producer Guru Deshpande is set to make a comeback as a movie distributor after a gap of 12 years with the forthcoming big-budget movie Katera in which Challenging Star Darshan plays the lead. The movie is scheduled for release across Karnataka on December 29.

"I distributed big-budget and successful movies of Tamil and Kannada till 2011. Later I stopped as my focus was on direction and production. I liked the trailer of the movie Katera. So, I decided to buy the distribution rights of the movie for the Hyderabad-Karnataka region," says Deshpande.

Deshpande said that Hyderabad-Karnataka region consists of 26 cities. "We are planning to screen the movie at two theaters in some of the cities and one theater in the remaining," Deshpande said.

He said he is also thinking of directing and bankrolling a movie by January-end. "It will be a social drama," he said. He has bankrolled the movies Gentleman, Love You Rachchu, and Pentagon. "I am happy with Gentleman and Love You Rachchu. Pentagon is an experimental movie with five short stories helmed by five directors. I ensure that all my movies break even. My experience as a director and distributor helps me avoid losses," he said.

Shoot recommences

The shooting of the movie Pink Note has recommenced in Dubai from December 9 and it is expected to continue for 30 days. Two schedules of the movie's shoot were completed one-and-half years ago but the third schedule that was supposed to begin in August or September 2022 got delayed.

As of now, Bhavana Menon and Prem of Nenapirali fame are at the shoot along with other actors. The shooting of two songs is also planned in Dubai. It is said the movie is women-centric and Bhavana plays a double role, one a bold and the other a homely woman while Prem plays a pivotal role. This is the first time Bhavana is playing a double role in a Kannada movie. Rakshan aka Rudresh is helming the movie that revolves around women who are cheated on the pretext of getting an overseas job and how they end up with wrong people. The cast of the movie includes Giri, Srinivas Prabhu, Muni and Yuga Chandru. The movie is bankrolled by H Anandappa under the Amma Enterprises banner.

Follow back

Vicky Kaushal's popularity scales new heights as he achieves a milestone on Instagram. With his recent film successes, particularly 'Sam Bahadur,' and 'Dunki', Vicky's fan base has surged, and Instagram itself seems to be captivated by the actor. In an unusual move, the platform's official handle has chosen to follow Vicky Kaushal, making him the only Indian celebrity to receive such recognition from Instagram.

This milestone comes on the heels of Vicky's stellar performances, notably his role as Sam Manekshaw in 'Sam Bahadur' and his recently released starrer 'Dunki.' His portrayal of Sukhi in 'Dunki' garnered immense acclaim, both from critics and fans, for his profound contribution to the storyline. Even Shah Rukh Khan, Vicky's co-star in 'Dunki,' showered praise on the actor, describing him as one of the finest he has worked with.

Shah Rukh's admiration for Vicky's performance reflected a sentiment shared by many. Reflecting on his experience working with SRK, Vicky expressed his awe, stating that the opportunity to work alongside the superstar was incredibly enlightening. With over 16.7 million followers on Instagram, Vicky Kaushal has now made history as the only Indian actor to be followed back by the platform's official account.**-ETimes**

Rosy picture

Triptii graciously accepts rose handed out to her by fan

Triptii Dimri, the actress who captivated audiences with her compelling performance in the recent film "Animal," found herself in a sweet moment of admiration at the Mumbai airport. Known for her standout roles in movies like "Qala" and "Bulbbul," Dimri has been gaining significant attention for her portrayal of Zoya in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's latest cinematic venture.

As she hurriedly made her way through the bustling airport on a Saturday night, Triptii Dimri encountered an unexpected yet heart-warming surprise from an ardent fan. Amidst the flurry of paparazzi and eager admirers, the actress was taken aback when a fan extended a rose to her.

In a delightful display of appreciation, Dimri accepted the gesture, blushing as she graciously posed for the cameras before boarding her flight. Triptii Dimri's journey in the film industry commenced with a brief role alongside Sridevi in "Mom." Looking ahead, Triptii Dimri's upcoming projects promise more noteworthy performances with films like "Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video," an untitled project alongside Yash, and Anand Tiwari's romantic film "Mere Mehboob Mere Sanam" opposite Vicky Kaushal. **-ETimes**

Personal value

Amidst the debate over Sandeep Reddy Vanga's 'Animal,' Sobhita Dhulipala shared her perspective on the expectations faced by filmmakers. At a roundtable with Bollywood Hungama, she highlighted the double standard in the industry. While storytellers are encouraged to infuse narratives with personal values, they face criticism when those values become evident in their work.

Sobhita emphasised on the complexity of this situation, advocating for a nuanced understanding of filmmakers' personal inspirations. She said, "you are like embossing your opinion on film and putting it out in public, but you are also expected to be 'correct'."

The discussion comes in the wake of heightened scrutiny surrounding 'Animal,' particularly directed at its portrayal of toxic masculinity and misogyny. Sandeep Reddy Vanga, the film's director, defended the characters against these criticisms, elucidating the personal motivations behind their creation in a recent interview with Galatta Plus.

'Animal' delves into the intricate dynamics of a dysfunctional father-son relationship, depicted by Anil Kapoor and Ranbir Kapoor. Rashmika Mandanna essays a crucial role in the narrative alongside Bobby Deol, Triptii Dimri. **-ETimes**

Not on centrestage

Actress Amber Heard was sidelined in the new 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom', the sequel to the 2018 superhero hit starring Jason Momoa. TMZ reports that according to Business Insider, Heard only appears on camera for about 20 minutes or so and while she does talk in the film, it is just a measly 11 lines apparently.

According to the portal, Heard shows up for a few action sequences toward the beginning and the end, but she's largely removed from the main story. Even though Momoa and her on-screen baby serves as a central plot point. Instead of Amber taking center stage, Momoa and Patrick Wilson end up teaming up and leading most of the film. Yahya Abdul-Mateen and Nicole Kidman are also in the mix.

Not surprising that Heard was downplayed that was being telegraphed dating back to 2022, when she was on trial after Johnny Depp sued her.

Walter Hamada, former Warner Bros. head got grilled in a deposition, and explained the studio decided to sideline her based on a lack of perceived chemistry between her and Momoa, and wanting a different story. **-IANS**